THE EYE:

BY OBADIAH OPTIC.

——VARIOUS OBJECTS FROM THE SENSE,
VARIOUSLY REPRESENTING. MILTON.

Vol. II.] THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1808. [No. 12.

Shook sudden from the bosom of the sky
A thousand shapes, or glide athwart the dusk,
Or stalk majestic on. Deep-roused, I feel
A sacred terror, a severe delight,
Creep through my mortal frame; and thus methinks
A voice than human more, th' abstracted ear
Of fancy strikes "Be not of us afraid,
Poor kindred man! thy fellow creatures we
From the same PARENT POWER our beings drew,
The same our Lord, our laws, and great pursuit." THOMPSON.

ALL nations with whom we have any intercourse, have not only a firm belief in the existence of an universal and omnipotent cause, whom we call GOD, but also, in the existence of a race of intelligent beings, infinitely inferior to him, in a very high degree superior to us; and have given them names according to the various grades of excellence of which they fancied these intelligences were possessed. In Scotland, they were known by the name of wee-folk, faries, faes, brownies, elves: In Ireland, the same names were adopted, with the addition of one not used among the Scotch, *beenshie*, a female spirit, who they said was heard about the witching time of night, with a voice enchantingly sweet, bewailing near the dwellings of their ancient chiefs, which was always the forerunner of death: In England, they were called faries, elves, gnomes, sylphs: In Germany, the white handed ladies, the ladies of the mines, with a great variety of titles too numerous to mention,—even among the most barbarous nations, these creatures were recognized, and the belief of them, until of late, acknowledged by all.

But as we increase in knowledge, it seems we increase in infidelity; and the existence of such intelligences is now, in our polite age, a subject of ridicule, Who ever saw any of these creatures? is an unanswerable appeal to our senses, and

the argument is gained, not by rational deductions or scriptural evidence, but by a bold appeal: Yet, were we to sit down calmly, observe, weigh dispationately, and then draw our conclusions, perhaps we would be led to believe that the tenets so warmly embraced by our ancestors are not without a foundation in the nature of things.

The Greeks, Romans, and all the Eastern nations, carried their opinion in this subject to very great lengths—nothing was without its spiritual inhabitants, earth, air, fire, water, trees, mountains, houses and temples, had all their particular deites; not only had men and women their guardian spirits, but their sheep, vineyards, cows and goats all were protected, fructified, improved by spiritual agency.

I trust I will not be deemed *superstitious*—if I be, let my opponents come forward and prove me so, to their essays the 'EYE' shall be open—when I thus declare my opinion,—I believe we are under the care of an infinitely wise and omnipotent BEING, who governs his universe by the agency of second causes,—not because his universal fiat could not fully answer the purpose at once; but because, in wisdom infinite, he has ordained cause and effect, and thereby teaches his finite creatures, that unless they *sow* they cannot expect to *reap*;—so he has ordained day and night, seed time and harvest, summer and winter, spring and autumn.

We have in scripture, different titles given us of various orders among the angelic choirs, but with their offices we are unacquainted. The apostle PAUL tells us, that there are celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies, natural bodies and spiritual bodies—of a spiritual body we can have at present no conceptions, we are only scholars in the school of materiality, and even there, with all our boasted knowledge, have made little progress.

The Jews, with the exception of the sadducees, were firm believers in the doctrine of spirits and spiritual appearances: In the book of JOB, ELIPHAZ gives us an account of a spirit which passed before his face, that an image was before his eyes, but he could not discern the form. It is written in the Psalms, that the Egyptians were vexed sore by evil angels. SAUL's application to the witch of Endor to raise up the spirit of SAMUEL, and the term familiar spirit, so much used among them, incontrovertibly prove that they were no strangers to the doctrine of spiritual existence. In the New Testament the whole history of demoniac possession, the discipies think

ing they had seen a spirit, the words of CHRIST, a spirit hath not flesh and bones, and the sadducees denying the doctrine, form abundant proof of the opinion having been generally entertained. Philosophy also aids us in this opinion, with strong analogical deductions.

There are, in my opinion, no atheists in existence, the thing appears impossible; we will therefore take it for granted, that there is a GOD, from whom all things have a derived origin. In examining the volume of nature from man down to things inanimate, we find a most wonderful chain of unbroken connexion from the man equaling a NEWTON in intelligence, an ABSALOM in beauty, to the ignorant Esquemaux, and the woolly inhabitant of the torrid zone; from the troglodyte to the aurangautang who walks upright as we, the ape, baboon, monkey, the dog through all his various grades, all of whom appear possessed of a considerable degree of intelligence, there seems not one link broken; reasoning downward still, we proceed, creatures less, but possessing design, present themselves to our wondering eye, perfect in their kind, admirable in their organization, all pursuing one grand object, namely, happiness; still our search is continued, the microscope lends its aid, and animalcula invisible to the naked eye, appear links of that infinitely extended chain; but at last, even the microscope fails, and we are lost in the infinity of diminutive vital existence—vegetative life opens then to view, we see not where the one ends, we know not where the other commences; conviction is present, such things are, and the incomprehensible chain continued even to the immoveable rock that grows in the wonderful quarry.

Again, taking man as a middle point, and reasoning upwards, we are immediately lost. the chain seems torn in sunder, a vast immeasurable chasm presents itself; it is true, the existence of DEITY has been admitted; but between him and the most enlightened of mortals the distance is infinite—there is no comparison—suppose angels be taken in the account, various degrees and grades analogous to the order that appears evident from man downwards, must then be granted, or the chain will be discontinued; grant us these grades, we ask no more—our argument is complete, the point gained. Thus reasoning, we can truly join with POPE in his beautiful lines, and close this essay—

" Vast chain of being which from GOD began,
Nature's etherial, human, angel, man;

Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eyes can see,
No glass can reach, from infinite to thee—
From thee to nothing—on superior powers
Were we to press, inferior might on ours;
Or in the full creation leave a void,
Where, one step broken, the great scale's destroyed:
From nature's chain whatever link you strike,
Tenth or ten thousandth breaks the chain alike."

OBADIAH OPTIC.

ORIGINAL.

LETTER TO JEREMIAH LISTLESS.

DEAR JERRY,

AFTER passing over mountains, through towns, and dangerous wildernesses; after "disasterous chances, many accidents and hair-breadth escapes," I have arrived in the far-famed and thrice renowned city of Philadelphia: I can by no means refrain from giving you an account of the civilized and enlightened people with whom I now live. You must know, my dear JERRY, that I have become author, and as I am a traveller, consequently an observer of men and manners, and am determined to make the best of my travels, by publishing them on my return.

I do not doubt but an account of the people here, with a little exaggeration, which is fashionable, would be as entertaining and astonishing to the inhabitants of our unlettered state, as Othello's history of the "Anthropophagi, and men whose heads grow beneath their shoulders" was to the fair Desdemona.—I have either heard read, or it is my own opinion, that the ladies form the best criterion of the manners and disposition of a people: This opinion accords so well with my views, and is so congenial to my *turn*, as my father used to say, that I am determined to confine my attention entirely to the fair sex.

I assume it as a fact, that the disposition and nature of a nation is discoverable in their dress and fashions, as readily as by their manners and actions; hypocrisy may counterfeit manners, and the actions of men, we know, are not often the types of their minds; but the dress will give you a correct idea of their taste. Dress with ladies is intended to please, and for this purpose their true and natural taste is exerted to the utmost; so, when we see some of the Indian tribes flatten

their heads, we must immediately conclude it is congenial to their ideas of taste, and therefore set them down as people of *flat* taste;—when we behold the Philadelphia misses with bonnets a foot high, we must set them down as people of *high* taste;—and when we see the Chinese pay more attention to their feet than their heads, we have a right to say they are people of *low* taste, &c. Now, from the article of dress of the ladies here, my dear JERRY, we may deduce whole pages of argument for and against them—so various is their dress, that one part contradicts another, which being the case, we might take it collectively, and decide they have an *inconsistent* taste. But I think it most proper to give a fair description of their dress, that thereby you may judge for yourself—and believe me my dear friend, this is no easy task, I consider it as difficult as the most complicated piece of architecture—in architecture we have the Corinthian, Doric, Gothic and other orders to describe by, but in the dress here, I see no order at all; and in fact, the order which nature was pleased to give their bodies is distorted, squeezed and pressed out of all order; you may however form a tolerable idea of this non-descript, heterogenous architecture of dress of these ladies, by comparing them to your near neighbours the Indians—like them, they appear to have a partiality for red, insomuch that some not only wear red slippers and dresses, but daub their faces after the manner of those savages; their ears, like those of the Indians, are hung with a profusion of curiously formed rings, and their necks with beads; like the Indians, they load their heads with a vast variety of fantastical indefinable ornaments, and lastly, like them they are indifferent with respect to concealing certain parts, as their arms, bosoms, &c. I cannot say, if from the similaity of dress we may induce that the natures of the Indian and Philadelphia ladies resemble each other; but I have discovered a very bloody minded savage disposition among some of the gentlemen here; would you believe, my friend, even in this civilized part of the world, they fight one another in cold blood with pistols!—they call shooting a fellow man down at their feet, taking *honourable satisfaction!*—they call robbing a child of its father and a wife of her husband, acting in behalf of their *honour!*—O, savage!—O, worse than Indian!—

But the Indian ladies differ from the ladies of Philadelphia in that the former are remarkably mute and exceedingly modest, and you never hear more than one speak at a time; but the latter (and I am told, it is the same in every *polite* part of

the world) are indefatigably loquacious; I have often heard a dozen at the same time, indulging themselves in most vehement verbose elocution, to the great annoyance of my ears; this they call tea-party chit-chat: If they were admitted to debate on the more important affairs of state, what an uproar would there be in congress hall! one might as well, in my opinion, be in Vulcan's thunderbolt manufactory, as among them.—They also differ in another respect from your neighbours: The male sex with the Indians maintain their dignity by holding in absolute subjection the female; but here, in many instances, the females decidedly "rule the roast."

As the ladies here, no doubt, are more enlightened than the savages, they consequently excel them in some of their articles of dress, I will therefore give a fuller description, you may then take my description in your hand and set an example of an Indian dress before you, and with both together you may form a faint idea of its nature, like the school boy, who has both the demonstration and the figure to assist his brain in conceiving of a problem.

It is now a question of dubious cogitation, whether, according to critical propriety, I should begin my description at the head or the foot. A modern poet, who it appears, like myself, is a stranger,* has attempted to introduce the foot into a more exalted station among the other members, by setting forth its importance and utility; he attempts to prove that the feet, tho' of *low origin and rank* in the walks of this life, should rightly dethrone the head, and claim the allegiance of it and the other members; but merely because the feet are often a more sure guide than the head, we must not argue that they should take its place, for we see the stern of a ship guides her whole course and is yet stuck behind I believe in every instance; besides, whoever will consider the nature of womankind, will be fully convinced that the reversion can never take place; for the ladies generally estimate a thing by its brilliancy and beauty, and not by its utility; therefore, inasmuch as the head is capable of sustaining a greater load of fashionable embellishments than the feet, it will most naturally hold its present conspicuous station:—The hair can be wrought into fantastic curls, and serve as a hold for combs somewhat less than the back of a windsor chair—the head will sustain a bonnet of an enormous magnitude—the ears, by boaring them full of holes,

* See vol. i. page 131.

will bear a precious weight of jewels, and I have suggested that the nose would be a most excellent support for rings and beads pendant, because it is situated in the very front of the face, and has three admirable places (the sides and partition) to suspend them from; but BILLY FLASH, who is a perfect adept in the science of gallantry and fashion, profoundly argues, that the ladies being of exceeding talkative dispositions, will always object to having any the least impediment near their lips, lest it should diminish the activity of their motion; furthermore, BILLY argues that nose-rings would be obstacles to the close delicious contact of the lips in kissing, and also prevent their taking snuff;—no doubt the ornaments of the nose cause the muteness of the Indian females, as I am convinced it is contrary to woman's nature to be silent—in consideration of these things, the ladies here, will not, in this one instance, invert the order of nature. Therefore I hope the *footeans*, or advocates for the feet, and the *headeans*, or advocates for the head, will henceforth be reconciled, and that all strictures will be suspended by you JERRY, if I commence my description of the ladies at their heads.

When we take a superficial or outward view of their heads, we see what they call bonnets, of undefinable and variable figures, many of which are three feet or more in circumference hung with ribbons, &c. a correct description of the shape of some of them is absolutely impossible, but if you form to yourself an idea of the figure, all the figures of Euclid jumbled together would make, then you have as good an idea of them as myself—this massy bonnet gives great weight, dignity and magnitude to the head, and when I see a lady triping along the street with one on, it puts me in mind of a new hatch'd patridge, running about the field with an egg shell sticking to its head larger than its body: Their combs, I judge from the measure of one I took with my thumb as I staggered under it from a tea-party, must be from six to ten inches wide, and proportionably long; their ears are stretched to a dangerous length by ear-rings of an enormous size; their hair frizzled and curled in every shape—their bodies they squeeze out of all shape except the fashionable shape, by elastic corsets and bandages; and my dear JERRY, observation gives a spring to genius, believe me, I have invented a new kind of corsets, which I intend to recommend to the ladies in a pamphlet, these give way in breathing, will screw to any size and will warrant a lady to sneeze or laugh *fashion-*

ably loud without inconvenience or danger; which pamphlet, in order to ensure its sale, shall contain an erudite apostrophe to fashion, to conclude with an encomium on the ladies of Philadelphia. Your's ROBERT RUSTIC.

SELECTED.

THE TWINS: A TALE.

EDWIN and EMMA, being at a very early age independent of those domestic ceremonies which make it necessary to weigh love by the ounce, and gold by the pound, tripped arm in arm, to the temple of Hymen, and yielded to the enthusiasm of eighteen. Cupid, Venus, and Juno were equally auspicious; the first inspired reciprocal sweetness, the second bestowed the graces of form, the third crowned their nuptials with as much as could possibly be expected; for, at the end of the first year, the amiable EMMA presented him with *twins*.

What pleasure are the offspring of unabated passion!—what a finishing does the parental give to the conjugal character! EDWIN and EMMA soon became conscious of the dignity; it shone through the tears, it dimpled in the smiles, it glowed in the blushes of the mother: In the father it was more characteristically conspicuous; one might plainly see the lately-named strippling gravitate to the family-man; the fond father was in his looks, his steps, manner, and movements, in short, his whole deportment was domestic; every thing declared that he was married and the father of *twins*.

An embarrassment arose. EMMA insisted upon suckling both the children at her own bosom.—EDWIN opposed it—their argument was interesting—I must assert, my dear husband, said EMMA, all the soft authority both of wife and mother, in order to do my children justice; as nature has not wholly unprovided for the present exigence, both have an equal right, and both must therefore be equally gratified; I must not be denied. EDWIN in opposition urged, the delicacy of her frame, her constitution, the impossibility, the danger, the impropriety! Nothing could satisfy the mother but a permission to indulge herself in the duties annexed to the tender character. EMMA's entreaties became at length, so far successful, that EDWIN appeared to acquiesce. The beautiful babes were suffered to wanton and cling to the bosom of EMMA. Of this, however, the inconvenience soon appeared—the poor EMMA became exhausted; and a fever unsettled

her senses. During her delirium, EDWIN, alarmed for his wife's safety, withdrew one of the children, and entrusted it privately to the care of a nurse. EMMA recovered and called for the child, which EDWIN pretended was dead and buried, thinking this the only stratagem that could reconcile her to its departure. EMMA was a Christian, and bore a separation occasioned by its death, much better than she had before borne the idea of parting with it while living. All her hopes were now drawn to a closer point; they all concentered in the child that survived. The lenitives of time restored to EMMA her health and serenity, and EDWARD (so was her darling called) prospered under her solicitude. But alas! EDWARD was by EMMA considered as the only son, for whom fondness commonly runs into extravagance; the consequence of such excessive love and luxury is always a spoiled child. JAMES, mean time, who had been weaned from the breast of his mother, and transplanted to the bosom of a foster-parent, as EDWIN allowed him privately, all that could enervate, would have been spoiled too, but destiny prevented it.

The woman who had him in charge, was detected in some idle practices with a tribe of itinerant Egyptians, such for instance, as assisting them in furnishing anecdotes to impose upon families by fortune-telling, &c. She grew enamoured of the oracular impostors, and soon joined the sable banditti; she bore away young JAMES in her arms.

The grief and surprise of this misfortune so affected EDWIN, that he discovered the whole affair to EMMA, who, unable to support the intelligence, fainted away. Upon recollecting her spirits, she said, Well, my EDWIN, I forgive your deception, because I see its motive, but the very best deception, you see, is bad. I have lost a child by it. EDWIN, without making any reply, sallied with an air of impatience into the street. It was the third day of the robbery. He could not prevail upon himself to disclose the theft sooner to EMMA. EDWIN followed the road that was beaten. It was in the middle of the summer—at an opening in the hedges, he observed a circle of women assembled in the next enclosure, under the shade of an oak. He hastened toward the spot, and perceiving an infant in the arms of a female, who was staining its silken skin with the tincture of certain berries, he ran with a father's speed, caught it away from her who held it, and with equal celerity, carried it home, without giving himself time to examine a feature. *(to be concluded)*

Poetical Department.

ORIGINAL.

AN EVENING RAMBLE.

MILD blew the breath of eve, a ling'ring gleam
From parting Sol, still glimmer'd in the west,
A cloudless horizon, the splendid beam
Darted o'er Schuylkill's undulating breast.

Whilst on the gentle slope I pensive stood,
Fan'd by the zephyrs of retiring day;
With eyes infix'd upon the silver flood,
That back reflected Sol's resplendent ray.

Sweet meditation came, with all her train,
And o'er my soul, their sombre mantle threw;
Whilst busy fancy to my yielding brain,
The magic pleasures of the sylvan drew.

O! that the destinies had fix'd my lot,
Upon this limpid stream's enamel'd bank—
Here, calm content should gild my humble cot,
And not a sigh escape for wealth or rank.

How would I sit with philosophic soul,
And contemplate what nature's hand hath made,
Survey the tints that richly gild the whole,
The green top'd hill, the woodland and the glade.

With what delight beneath some aged tree,
Would listen to the warblers of the wood;
Or wanton, lively, unconcern'd and free,
In sportive pleasures on this lucid flood.

Here might I live, remote from care and strife,
And unto nature tell my simple lays;
At virtue's shrine expend a happy life—
In thought, in love, in friendship, pray'r and praise.

The magic broke—the num'rous weighty ills
Of fleeting life came rushing on my view;
The sun had sunk behind the western hills,
And thoughtful, I reluctantly withdrew. LORENZO.

ORIGINAL.

MUSIC AND LOVE.

FIRST with the flute's soft melancholy,
In sighing strains I sought my love,
Inspiring raptures sweet and holy,
And mildly pensive as the dove.

Then with the deep toned violin,
In solemn sad and mournful strain,
Sad notes I touch'd, her soul to win,
And full of sorrow as love's pain.

Then with sonorous clarionette,
I waked the silent midnight air,
To touch the heart of my coquette,
With notes as harsh as my despair.

These gentler sounds delight no more!
When heav'n's fierce fires the clouds do sunder,
When the loud howling tempests roar,
And the earth rocks with horrid thunder—

My soul forgets the storm within,
And sleeps delightful, calm and even,
Smiles at the earth's tremendous din
Shakes off despair and looks to heaven!

THE STRANGER.

ORIGINAL.

NINNETTE.

Addressed to a young Lady, who asked me if ever I loved?

DID e'er I love? why doubt it? fye!
Ah yes, if angels love in heav'n,
My thoughts were tuned to love ere I
Poor boy! in years had told twice sev'n.

A beaut'ous little dear, whose head
Might just attain my bosom's height,
Loved all I did, loved all I said,
And was, in all, my life's delight.—

Her form was like the dawn-ray bright,
That lightly bounds o'er wavy stream—
Yes, sweetly delicate to sight,
As e'er was kindling day-spring beam.

Her eyes were of etherial blue,
Floating in humid beamy light,
Fair, with her soft cheek's rose-bud hue
Mingled the mountain snow-drop's white.

Her look was innocence divine,
Where all might love and mildness read;
My thoughts were her's, her thoughts were mine,
And O! our love was love indeed.

Not like the passion, wild as fire,
That oft, too oft marks ripen'd years
Fervid and restless, prone to ire,
And fever'd oft by doubts and fears.

O no! 'twas not a love like this,
But such as innocence may prove,
A love that in itself was bliss,
And had no aim but just to love.

Poor dear NINNETTE! our parting day
Came heavy with our love's first pain;
Weeping and wept, she went away,
Nor e'er, sweet girl! return'd again. GLORMON.

ORIGINAL.

ANSWER TO THE CHARADE—PAGE 132.

WITHOUT the aid of magic touch,
How often do we see
Man changed to brute by drinking much
Of RUM or ratafia.

If we reverse the sot's delight,
Then twice the same come o'er—
To MURMUR we will find we write,
Which all do less or more.

But mostly those who love the RUM,
Do double the *reverse*,
When they to want and trouble come,
And fortune proves adverse. *****

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"*A Tale*," by *J*— is not admissible, it is too simply told Tho' few may believe it, yet of all kinds of composition, simple tales told well, is the most difficult, and few have succeeded in the attempt; but let not the author be discouraged, there are some very fine lines in his production, which argue strong powers of mind, and we doubt not but by more reading in books, but especially nature, he will also deserve high approbation.